

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 L-03 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /047 W

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O R 131204Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9526

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UMJOD/AMCONSUL UDORN 2295

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16724

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA

SUBJ: LAO AIRCRAFT

REF: BANGKOK 16634

1. ADCM WAS TELEPHONED TODAY BY CHEIF OF STAFF,SUPREME COMMAND, GNERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN. KRIANGSAK SAID HE WAS CALLING ON INSTRUCTIONS OF MOD, WHICH IN TURN WAS RESPONDING TO INQUIRY FROM MFA THAT HAD ORIGINATED WITH PRIME MINISTER.

2. KRIANGSAK SAID HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO EXPLAND TO MOD (AND MFA AND PM) STATUS OF LAOTIAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN THAILAND. HE WAS REPLYING THAT AIRCRAFT LOCATED UDORN AIR FORCE BASE, FORMERLY USED FOR TRAINING OR UNDER REPAIR, WERE BEYOND REACH OF THAI (HIS EXACT WORDS WERE, " THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WILL NOT PUT HANDS ON THOSE PLANES"). KRIANGSAK WAS ADVISING MOD THAT THOSE AIRCRAFT WERE A MATTER TO BE SETTLED BETWEEN USG AND PGNU.

3. IN ADDITION TO AIRCRAFT DISCUSSED IN PREVIOUS PARA, KRIANGSAK ALLUDED TO TWO HELICOPTERS WHOSE TAIL NUMBERS HE GAVE AS 3699 AND 0577. (THESE ARE EVIDENTLY THE
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HELICOPTERS BROUGHT TO THAILAND BY DEFECTING LAOTIAN

MILITARY PERSONNEL, PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY US. WE BELIEVE ONE OF THEM IS AT UBON AND THE OTHER IS ON THAI SIDE OF UDORN AIR FORCE BASE. WE ARE SEEKING TO VERIFY TAIL NUMBER OF HELICOPTER AT UDORN.) WITH REFERENCE TO THESE HELICOPTERS, KRIANGSAK SAID, PRIME MINISTER WISHED THAT THEY BE RETURNED TO LAOS. PURPOSE OF KRIANGSAK'S CALL WAS TO ASK WHETHER THEY BELONGED TO LAOS OR U.S. KRIANGSAK SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT WHATEVER ANSWER WE GAVE THEM. IF WE SAID HELICOPTERS BELONGED TO U.S. HE WOULD ADVISE GOVERNMENT ACCORDINGLY AND TAKE VIEW THAT THEY TOO WERE U.S. -LAOTIAN ISSUE. BUT HE HAD TO HAVE A "YES-OR-NO" ANSWER.

4. KRIANGSAK FOLLOWED UP PHONE CALL WITH HAND-CARRIED LETTER RESTATING SAME MATTERS.

5. WE ARE REPLYING TO KRIANGSAK ALONG FOLLOWING LINES. THE TWO HELICOPTERS WERE TURNED OVER BY THE USG TO THE LAOTIAN ARMED FORCES, TO WHOM THEY BELONG. WHILE WE ARE NOT CLAIMING REVERSIONARY TITLE AT THIS TIME, NEVERTHELESS FOR REASONS DISCUSSED BY THE AMBASSADOR WITH MFA UNDER SECRETARY PHAEN ON 12 AUGUST, WE ARE IN NO HURRY TO SEE THEM RETURNED. AMBASSADOR GAINED IMPRESSION THAT UNDER SECRETARY PHAEN SHARED THIS VIEW. WE HOPE RTG WILL ALLOW US TIME TO TAKE A READING WITH WASHINGTON BEFORE TAKING ANY FURTHER ACTION ON HELICOPTERS. WHITEHOUSE

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